Business Forecast Quarter 3 Review Conference Call June 3, 2015

1:00pm to 2:00pm

Dial-in Number: 641-715-3580 Meeting ID: 488-092-565

Background

USAID's Business Forecast is published each quarter throughout the fiscal year. The Agency's Business Forecast is an informational resource on potential funding and partnership opportunities at USAID. It is an advanced look at grants, contracts, and cooperative agreements that USAID is in the process of developing and plans to issue in the coming year. Two separate Forecasts are developed each quarter – one for USAID Missions overseas and one for USAID in Washington, DC. Organizations interested in working with USAID can use this tool to plan for proposal or application submissions.

USAID Participants

- 1. Aman Djahanbani, USAID Senior Procurement Executive
- 2. Mauricio Vera, Director, OSDBU
- 3. Kimberly Ball, Deputy Director, OSDBU
- 4. Mark Walther, Deputy Director for Washington Operations
- 5. Charity Benson, M/OAA Senior Advisor
- 6. Matthew Johnson, M/OAA Communications Director
- 7. Diane Perone, (Acting) USAID Acquisition and Assistance Ombudsman
- 8. Mandy Parham, Foreign Service Officer

Agenda

- Matt will kick it off and introduce all of the staff on the line.
- Matt will go over the agenda for the call, as well as remind participants to mute their phones, and email: <u>ombudsman@usaid.gov</u> for live questions during the call.
- Matt introduces Mark Walther for opening remarks from M/OAA.
- Matt then hands it over to Mauricio Vera for remarks.
- Matt goes through all pre-submitted Q&As on the Business Forecast process and specific requirements listed or omitted from the Forecast.
- Matt will take questions that are submitted during the call.
- Conclusion

SCRIPT for BUSINESS FORECAST CONFERENCE CALL

Opening Remarks by Mark Walther

- Good afternoon everyone. On behalf of Aman, I want to thank all of you for joining us today, especially those calling from overseas. I am sure it is late for you and I appreciate you staying awake to participate.
- We hope this call will be useful to you and provide clarification on the Business Forecast as well as answer specific questions about funding opportunities with USAID.
- We understand that the Business Forecast is a very important resource for you.
- My team and I greatly appreciate all of the honest comments and feedback that we receive from you on the Forecast.
- Through the feedback we received during our last call, we've made several improvements to the Business Forecast. These improvements include:
 - Adding a "changes" column, noting new and updated opportunities,
 - Creating smaller and more accurate total estimated cost (TEC) ranges, and
 - A column that provides the solicitation number, when it becomes available, for specific opportunities.
- In addition to these changes to the Forecast, we've also created the Business Forecast update alerts list so that you can be notified when changes have been made
- We've also redone our Business Forecast webpage, which now includes a Frequently Asked Questions page -- which after today's call will be updated.
- We know that there is still a lot of room for improvement for our Business Forecast.
- Please continue to share your ideas. We greatly appreciate your ideas and input as to how we can make the Forecast better.
- Once again thank you for calling in today.

Q&A on Business Forecast

GENERAL QUESTIONS

Mark: Question -- Can you talk to us a little bit about how the Business Forecast is created?

USAID Response:

- USAID has an a system called the Acquisition and Assistance (or A&A) planning tool that we use to track all of our future programs and activity.
- The system is used by Program Officers, Contracting, Agreement Officer's, Sr. Leadership, and others in the Agency.
- It's our internal system to track everything we do related to A&A actions.
- At the end of each quarter, we send a notice out to all contracting and agreement officers notifying them that we are going to be pulling the Business Forecast. At this point, COs and AOs go into the system and identify their programs/activities that are appropriate for the Business Forecast.
- Once the forecast has been pulled we have a number of folks go through the Forecast to review the information.
- Once it has been reviewed and approve we post the Forecast on our webpage.

Mark: Question -- How can Partners ensure that the information on the Business Forecast is reliable and accurate?

- USAID is taking a number of steps to ensure the accuracy of the Business Forecast.

 USAID has begun a detailed review of the Forecast each quarter before publishing it.
- In addition, the Agency has rolled-out a new Acquisition and Assistance (A&A) planning system that allows for Program Officers, Contracting/Agreement Officers, Senior Leaders, etc. to collaborate and track all upcoming actions.
- This new system replaces an old process of hundreds of spreadsheets.
- In addition, through doing these quarterly calls with Partners and the questions we receive, we're seeing patterns of mistakes that are frequently being made by USAID on the Forecast.
- We are taking steps internally to address these issues.
- Just this morning I sent a note out to all of our Contracting and Agreement Officers around the world informing them that we are going to reissue the business forecast sometime in the next week correcting the many errors on the Business Forecast.

- I would like to make one important note on the Business Forecast -- the Forecast is a snapshot in time of USAID's program cycle.
- During the design of planned activities, information is subject to change as USAID determines how to most effectively and efficiently implement its activities.
- So, while we are taking a number of steps to ensure the accuracy of the Forecast, there will always be changes to planned activities between the quarterly updates.

Mark: Question -- Why are so many dates inaccurate on the Business Forecast? There seem to be many dates that have already passed, yet no solicitation has been issued.

USAID Response:

- Yes -- this was a major issues with the latest version of the forecast.
- We are very sorry for the number of errors.
- As I mentioned previously, we are working to correct this issue and are planning on issuing an updated Business Forecast with new and more accurate dates sometime over the next week.

Mauricio: Question -- Can you explain the role that your office, OSDBU, plays in the creation of the Business Forecast?

USAID Response:

- The M Bureau's Office of Acquisition and Assistance has the primary responsibility for managing and issuing the agency's business forecast.
- OSDBU reviews the document before it is issued and collaborates on changes/updates to its format.
- In some instances, OSDBU may have the opportunity to address the description of the requirements to ensure that the small business community has enough information to determine if they wish to pursue the requirement as a prime or a sub.

Mauricio: Question -- The Mission forecast includes no set asides for small business (vis-a-vis the Washington forecast). How should small businesses interpret this? Will Missions rely solely on Washington IQC small business holders to achieve the Mission small business goal?

- In the early stages of the acquisition process, formal market research hasn't been conducted.
- Missions frequently have not decided whether a solicitation will be issued as a small business set-aside or a full and open competition.

- If you see a requirement that could be performed by a small business, please contact the mission's contracting officer directly and forward a copy of your correspondence to USAID's OSDBU (osdbu@usaid.gov).
- And no, missions will not rely solely on Washington small business IDIQs holders to help meet the agency's overseas targets.

Aman: Question -- Why are planned actions removed from the Business Forecast?

USAID Response:

- There are a number of different reasons why opportunities are removed from the Business Forecast.
- In some cases, opportunities are removed because USAID is no longer planning on implementing them.
- In other cases, opportunities are removed because there are no longer funds available to implement the activity.
- Other times, opportunities are removed because USAID cannot verify the accuracy of the information. Often, during the design phase, scopes of work, implementing mechanisms, program objectives, etc., change. When major changes happen, the design of an activity starts over again.
- If you have questions about specific solicitations and why they were removed, we recommend reaching out to the point of contact listed on the Forecast with a cc: ombudsman@usaid.gov.

Aman: Question -- Several partners mentioned that they have begun reaching out to the points of contacts listed in the Business Forecast, however they've had mixed results in getting responses. What do you recommend they do?

- I appreciate being made aware of this issue.
- We are regularly communicating with the field about the importance of answering questions.
- We are continually stressing the importance of responding to partners questions.
- One of the reasons why we're started conducting these call is to help field many of the questions when a new Forecast is released.
- If you have a question that is not being answered by this call, then we recommend reaching out to the Point of Contact listed on the Forecast.
- If you are not getting responses back from the Points of Contact listed, please e-mail ombudsman@usaid.gov.

• The Agency's Ombudsman and our communications team will assist in getting responses for you.

Mauricio: Question -- There are a number of items on the Business Forecast that Small Businesses have the capabilities and skills to implement. What is the best way to notify USAID of the small businesses capabilities to implement these activities?

USAID Response:

- The best way to notify USAID of the small business capabilities to implement the activities is to contact the Mission's contracting officer directly.
- Please provide the mission with your capabilities and your knowledge of other small businesses who are capable of implementing the activities.
- Please copy OSDBU on any requests for Missions to consider an activity for a small business set-aside.

Mark: Question -- Can USAID please clarify it's practice for including IDIQs/IQCs, LWAs, and other global mechanisms on the Business Forecast?

USAID Response:

- USAID includes all full and open competitive actions on the Business Forecast.
- Therefore, opportunities such as task orders issued under IDIQs should not be included on the Forecast.

Mark: Question -- There are many countries missing from the Business Forecast. Why are they missing? How does USAID ensure that all Missions are providing information for the Business Forecast?

- Our goal is to ensure that all Missions are included on the Business Forecast.
- However, there are a variety of different reasons why Mission may not be listed on the Business Forecast.
- In some cases, Missions have no new opportunities available or new opportunities may be too early in the planning process to be included on the Business Forecast.
- In addition, there are times that Missions do not submit information on time for the Business Forecast release. In those instances, we work with Missions to publish information as soon as it is available.
- If you have questions about a specific Mission missing from the Forecast, please contact the Mission directly, copying ombudsman@usaid.gov.

WASHINGTON SPECIFIC SOLICITATION QUESTIONS

Mark: Question -- <u>Global Health Bureau</u>: We noticed the Bureau of global health does not have many activities forecasted. Is this correct?

USAID Response:

• There are a few Global Health Bureau related actions that should have appeared be on the Business Forecast. We are working to correct this mistake. Global Health activities will be posted in the next update to the Business Forecast.

Mark: Question -- <u>Global Health Bureau:</u> We have not seen any of the upcoming Office of Population opportunities on the forecast. What is the status of upcoming Global Office of Population bids, their expected release dates, agreement type and approximate value?

USAID Response:

• There are one or two solicitations related to the Office of Population that will appear on the next update to the Business Forecast.

Mark: Question -- DCHA Bureau: Is it anticipated that the DCHA "Regional and Local Support for Elections and Political Transitions" opportunity will single or multiple award? As the anticipated solicitation release date for "Regional and Local Support for Elections and Political Transitions" has passed, could USAID please provide an updated estimated release date?

USAID Response:

- Multiple awards are anticipated.
- The estimated solicitation release date is 3rd Quarter FY15.

<u>Mark: Question -- E3 Bureau:</u> Please inform us of the status of the procurement for Construction Management Services (SOL-OAA-15-000071), which was the subject of a sources sought notice posted April 9, 2015. When will an RFP be issued? Is it USAID's intention to reserve this contract for small businesses? Will large businesses be allowed to compete or will there be a separate vehicle for large businesses?

- The new date for release of the RFP is 9/30/15.
- Other details of the solicitation, including small business is under review/being finalized.

Mark: Question -- Legislative and Public Affairs Bureau: There are three anticipated contracts listed by the Legislative and Public Affairs (LPA) Bureau: LPA Long Term Bureau Support Contract for Surge Support Services ranging from \$10-\$24.99 million, LPA Long Term Bureau Support Contract ranging from \$4-\$9.99 million, and MyUSAID Support ranging from \$1-\$3.99 million. Would USAID consider procuring any of these contracts as Small Business set-asides, given that there are a number of Small Businesses that would be well-positioned to perform services under these contracts?

USAID Response:

- LPA Long Term Support Contract for Surge Support Services is now being referred to as
 Technical and Specialized Public Affairs Assistance This contract is being awarded under the
 GSA Federal Supply Schedule. It envisions a multiple award BPA with multiple small businesses
 and a large business. Responses will only be considered from offerors that hold a current 541
 Schedule for Advertising and Integrated Marketing Solutions (AIMS).
- LPA Long Term Bureau Support Contract This is the same contract as the LPA Long Term Support Contract for Surge Support Services. Again, this is now Technical and Specialized Public Affairs Assistance.
- MyUSAID Support This contract is being awarded under the 8(a) Program.

Mark: Question -- <u>Latin American and the Caribbean Bureau</u>: Is the New Higher Education Activity listed on the Washington forecast the same opportunity as the recently released Regional Workforce Development Program (RFA-OAA-15-000011)?

- Yes, the New Higher Education Activity was recently released as RFA-OAA-15-000011 for LAC/RSD Regional Workforce Development Program.
- Amendment #1 to the Regional Workforce Development Program (RFA-OAA-15-000011)
 was posted on Grants.com May 20 and the closing date for receipt of applications has
 been extended to June 17.

MISSION SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

Mandy: Question -- <u>Afghanistan</u>: Afghanistan RADP-E has been lingering on the forecast, with largely the same information and a 3/15/15 release date for months. Is there any update on this procurement?

USAID Response:

RADP-East has a projected release date of early August, with an anticipated award date
of February 2016.

Mandy: Question -- <u>Bangladesh</u>: New Adolescent/Reproductive Health Project listed on the Forecast. Does USAID anticipate this activity will be restricted to local applicants only?

USAID Response:

• It is anticipated that this action will be full and open

Mandy: Question -- <u>Barbados</u>: "At-Risk Youth Program" was originally scheduled to be released on 3/31/2015. Do you have an updated timeframe for the release of the solicitation? Also, has the instrument type (Assistance or Acquisition) been determined?

USAID Response:

- The Mission opted to remove the program requirement until the project design process is completed.
- This action had been listed for a long period of time and there is not a clear indication of when the solicitation will come out.
- Once details for this activity become more solidified, USAID will add it back on to the Forecast.
- The instrument has not been determined yet.

Mandy: Question -- <u>Cambodia</u>: The mission is Cambodia has announced two new malaria projects and one health commodities social marketing project. There are at least 5 WOSB that can provide these services. Would the mission consider a WOSB set aside? Would the mission accept a sources sought application?

- Sometime in the next few weeks, the Mission will release draft SOW for the new Malaria project through an RFI.
- We encourage the 5 WOSBs to submit comments in response to the RFI.

Mandy: Question -- <u>Colombia</u>: "Connecting Producers to Markets" was originally scheduled to be released on 3/2/2015. Do you have an updated timeframe for the release of this solicitation?

USAID Response:

- Due to delays in developing the project's design, we are anticipating a new solicitation date to be FY15 (September 15th);
- The Award Type is still TBD.

Mandy: Question -- <u>Democratic Republic of Congo</u>: The forecast previously showed a followon Rule of Law Activity, which has now disappeared from the forecast. Please could you provide any information on this opportunity, and whether it will now be released via an IQC?

USAID Response:

- The information released on the business forecast was included for the benefit of industry as the award was still in the design process when it was identified on the forecast.
- Since that time, a determination of instrument type was submitted and approved by the Agreement Officer to proceed with a planned assistance instrument for this activity.
- Further, a cooperative agreement (associate award under LWA) has been awarded for this activity.

Mandy: Question -- <u>El Salvador</u>: The 5/4/15 forecast shows the El Salvador Transparency/Civic Education/Anti-Corruption procurement for a 6/30/15 release. Please confirm that this is accurate. Please also indicate whether this will be released as a Cooperative Agreement or a Contract and the anticipated period of performance.

USAID Response:

- The El Salvador Transparency requirement is still scheduled to be released by 6/30/15. We anticipate releasing it as acquisition.
- We anticipate that the performance period will be five years.

Mandy: Question -- <u>Ghana:</u> Regarding the entry labeled "Northern Ghana Governance," what is the difference between this activity and the Resilience in Northern Ghana (RING) activity, which started in 2014?

USAID Response:

- The Resiliency in Northern Ghana (RING) activity which began in 2014 is an integrated project and partnership effort under USAID's Feed the Future (FtF) Initiative designed to contribute to Government of Ghana efforts to sustainably reduce poverty and improve nutritional status of vulnerable populations.
- The entry labeled "Northern Ghana Governance" activity is intended to accelerate governance improvements and manage conflict in support of enhanced agricultural development in Ghana's Northern, Upper East and Upper West Regions.

Mandy: Question -- <u>Guatemala</u>: USAID Guatemala released a RFI for Citizens for Health Communities Project (520-15-00005) with responses to be submitted no later than March 5. What is the estimated release date of the final solicitation documents?

USAID Response:

- The RFI answers from the community brought up some items that we tried to incorporate into the solicitation.
- The name has changed, due to some RFI responses thinking it was a health based project.
- We are now calling it Community Led Development, however it could possibly change again. We anticipate this solicitation will be issued no later than July.

Mandy: Question -- <u>Indonesia</u>: Eastern Indonesia Project for Gender Based Violence: Does USAID anticipate that this opportunity will be restricted to local applicants only? Can USAID provide an award description? In addition, the Award/Action Type is listed as TBD. Can USAID confirm whether this tender will be released as contract or cooperative agreement?

USAID Response:

- The RFA will be based on full and open competition and projected to be released July 23, 2015.
- The resultant award is anticipated to be a cooperative agreement that is in response to high levels of violence against women (VAW) and obstacles to promoting and protecting women's rights in eastern Indonesia.
- The program is consistent with USAID Indonesia's Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS) and the recommendations of the 2012 USAID Papua Strategic Assessment

Mandy: Question -- <u>Kenya</u>: Would USAID confirm that the Social Protection activity appearing on Kenya's Q2 forecast is no longer planned, as it has been dropped from the Q3 forecast?

USAID Response:

 The Social Protection activity is no longer planned, which is why it was removed from the Business Forecast.

Mandy: Question -- Mozambique: Can USAID provide a description for Mozambique-Education activity?

<u>USAID Response</u>:

- USAID's Mozambique Education Initiative, referred to as the Leitura Project will support
 the Mission's CDCS DO 3 "Improved Education and Training" and will address the
 Mission's immediate result 3.1 "Improved reading outcomes for students in early
 grades." The goal of this project is three-fold:
 - More students received quality reading instruction
 - Improved capacity of the government of Mozambique (GRM) institutions to support early grade reading, and
 - O Strengthened civil society engagement in early grade reading.
- Activities under this project will be procured through a competitive process during 2015/2016 calendar years.

Mandy: Question -- <u>Nicaragua:</u> Does USAID/Nicaragua have any new business opportunities they are planning to add to the forecast?

USAID Response:

• The Mission is not currently working on new awards. For now, they are only funding current activities.

Mandy: Question -- <u>Pakistan:</u> Please provide any updates on the anticipated solicitation release dates for the following: Pakistan Small and Medium Enterprise Activity (SMEA), anticipated solicitation release date is listed as 5/31/2015.

USAID Response:

• Anticipated solicitation release date for this activity is June 30, 2015 and anticipated award date is Feb 26, 2016.

Mandy: Question -- <u>Uganda</u>: Is the Expanding Access to Long Term Family Planning Methods a follow on to an existing project in Uganda? What is the new anticipated solicitation release date? How much private sector involvement will the project entail?

- The new long term family planning activity will be a follow on to the current award with MSI.
- It is scheduled for award in summer 2016.
- Its focus will primarily be on long term and permanent methods, with a significant private sector involvement, just as it was under its predecessor.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHANGES TO THE FORECAST

Question -- Could USAID consider including a "date last updated" field, so readers could more easily identify where changes have been made since the last forecast?

USAID Response:

- In the latest iteration of the Business Forecast, USAID included a column that note if an activity has been updated.
- We are looking into the possibility of including a "date last updated" field into the Forecast.

Question -- Can the name of the incumbent be included and/or updated when applicable?

USAID Response:

- Yes, USAID added this feature to the Business Forecast in its most recent release.
- We are still working with staff around the world to ensure that this information is populated in the A&A system and therefore included in the Business Forecast.

Question -- Would it be possible to include Foreign Assistance Dashboard (FAD) activity codes, categories, or objectives in the Business Forecast?

- Our A&A planning system does not currently capture FAD Activity Codes, however it does capture activity sectors.
- USAID is looking in the possibility of adding this field into future Forecasts.

ADDITIONAL WASHINGTON QUESTIONS

MARK: DCHA Bureau: The Active Communities – Effective States (ACES) program, and the Global Award for Accountable Governance program on the Forecast seem to be identical – what is the difference? In addition, are either of these opportunities related to the "Democratic, Responsive, and Accountable GOverNance (DRAGON)" RFI that was issued on July 9, 2014?

USAID Response:

- "DRAGON" has been renamed to "ACES."
- The ACES and the Global Award for Accountable Governance program are one in the same.
- Only ACES should be listed.
- USAID will make update this for the next iteration of the Forecast.

<u>Mark: DCHA Bureau:</u> Can you provide any updates regarding the Global Human Rights LWA, meant to replace the existing HR LWA with Freedom House, that last appeared on the July 2014 USAID Business Forecast? Is USAID still planning to issue this LWA? If so, is there an estimate on when the solicitation will come out?

USAID Response:

- USAID is still planning for a new Global Human Rights LWA.
- The estimated solicitation release date is 4th Quarter FY15 or 1st Quarter FY16.
- The Business Forecast will be updated with this information

<u>Mark: E3 Bureau:</u> In the September update, the Higher Education Annual Program Statement within the E3 Office of Education was listed on the Washington forecast. However it did not appear on the January, February or May updates. Is this opportunity the same as Higher Education Partnerships for Innovation and Impact (HEPII) for which a request for comments was released in March 2015 (SOL-OAA-15-000048)?

USAID Response:

• Yes, this is the same opportunity.

<u>Mark -- E&E Bureau</u>: What is the status of the Economic Development, Governance and Entrepreneurship (EDGE) project that was listed in the previous Washington forecast but not in the current forecast?

USAID Response:

USAID is no longer planning this activity, which is why it was removed from the Forecast

ADDITIONAL MISSION QUESTIONS

<u>Mandy: Ukraine:</u> Given the present level of unrest in Ukraine, does USAID anticipate additional procurements in the next several months beyond what is listed in the May 2015 Mission Forecast?

USAID Response:

- There are no additional procurements planned in the next several months.
- The information in the Ukraine forecast is current.

<u>Mandy: Ukraine:</u> Regarding the entry marked "PCS: Monitoring and evaluation services/analytical IQC (TBC)" the anticipated solicitation date is 4/30/15 which is in the past. What is the revised anticipated solicitation date?

USAID Response:

• Monitoring and evaluation services/analytical IQC solicitation date will be June 30, 2015.

<u>Mandy: Peru:</u> Peru is currently not listed on the Business Forecast. Does USAID/Peru have any new business opportunities they are planning to add to the forecast?

USAID Response:

- USAID/Peru is currently in the design phase for a substantial suite of new projects but has been delayed due to uncertainty of funding.
- At the present, the Mission is in the very early stages of design discussions and will include these
 activities in the forecast in 4th quarter FY 2015 or 1st Quarter FY 2016 Forecast at the very
 latest.

<u>Mandy: Nigeria:</u> Does USAID have further details to provide regarding the Nigeria Strengthening Delivery of Malaria Case Management IDIQ and whether the resulting award will be made to one single holder, or whether there may be multiple awards made to multiple holders?

USAID Response:

- The solicitation date will be approximately September 20, 2015
- We anticipate that this will be a single-award IDIQ.

<u>Mandy: Jordan</u>: Syria Essential Services has a release date for this program is listed as October 2016 with an award date of May 2016. Can USAID clarify the anticipated release and award dates for this program?

USAID Response:

• The anticipated release date is late August 2015 with anticipated award of June 2016.

Mandy: Indonesia: Please provide any updates on the anticipated solicitation release dates for the following: Indonesia Workforce Development, anticipated solicitation release date is listed as 4/1/2015

USAID Response:

- The team is currently completing the design of this program.
- The anticipated solicitation release date is September 2015.

<u>Mandy: Bangladesh</u>: Bangladesh has 18 upcoming procurements listed, all of which are anticipated as Cooperative Agreements. Please confirm that this is accurate.

USAID Response:

- The Mission has had to reevaluate a number of its programs.
- It no longer has 18 planned actions due to FY15 funding levels.
- The Mission is now working on 9 activities which are tentatively planned to be issued as Cooperative Agreements or Grants.
- This information will be updated in the next iteration of the Business Forecast.

<u>Mandy: Colombia:</u> USAID Mission in Colombia planning any new environment activities, and if so, could USAID/Colombia please provide additional detail in the new business forecast?

USAID Response:

- Yes, the Mission is currently designing new Environment activities.
- This Mission plans to add these activities in next quarter's Business Forecast.

Mandy: Democratic Republic of Congo: Regarding the entry marked "Integrated HIV/AIDS Project (IHAP)" the anticipated solicitation date is 3/14/15. What is the revised anticipated solicitation date?

USAID Response:

• The revised anticipated solicitation date is August 15, 2015.